

PS
3061
.T5
R52L
1887

COPYRIGHT, 1887, BY
D. LOTHROP COMPANY.

ROSA HARTWICK THORPE is 77 years old, and everyone in California is sending flowers to her home in San Diego. What, you don't know who Rosa Hartwick Thorpe is? Tst, tst, tst! Well, if you must be told anything so simple, she, dear friends, is the author of "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight." Do you remember the first two lines:

"England's sun was slowly setting o'er the
hilltops far away,

Filling all the land with beauty at the close of
one sad day."

Way back in 1865, 13-year-old Rosa Hartwick wrote the famous poem on her school slate. Since then the whole world has learned of how Bessie climbed the dark tower of the church, grasped the great tongue of the bell and swung to and fro with it, thus saving "fair young Basil's" life. "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight" has been declaimed in thousands of schoolrooms; it has been heard on the stage over and over again; it has been parodied and made fun of, and not long ago I saw it in a movie. Apparently it's destined for immortality. Mrs. Thorpe has written 13 volumes of verse and prose, but nothing she's ever done since "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight" has ever caught the public fancy as did that childish effort.

9/27/29
o o o

FEW SHALL NOT RING TO-NIGHT.
of "Curfew shall not ring to-night," and in what year
1867, by Miss Rose Hartwick of Litchfield, Mass.
born in 1850, and in 1871 married Mr. E. C. The
Bla

CLARK & CO., BOSTON.

Little Bessie's Story, from "The Prisoner of Zenda" 1870

CURFEW MUST NOT RING TO-NIGHT.

ENGLAND'S sun was slowly setting o'er the hill-tops far away,
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day;
And its last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair, —
He with steps so slow and weary, she with sunny, floating hair:
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful; she with lips so cold and
white,
Struggled to keep back the murmur, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,
With its walls so tall and gloomy, — moss-grown walls dark, damp, and
cold, —

"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is nigh.
Cromwell will not come till sunset"; and her lips grew strangely white
As she spoke in husky whispers, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton (every word pierced her young heart
Like a gleaming death-winged arrow, like a deadly poisoned dart).

"Long, long years I've rung the curfew from that gloomy, shadowed
tower;

Every evening, just at sunset, it has tolled the twilight hour.

I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right;

Now I'm old I will not miss it: Curfew bell must ring to-night!"

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful
brow,

And within her heart's deep centre Bessie made a solemn vow.

She had listened while the judges read, without a tear or sigh,

"At the ringing of the curfew Basil Underwood *must die*."

And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright;

One low murmur, faintly spoken, "Curfew *must not* ring to-night!"

She with quick step bounded forward, sprang within the old church
door,

Left the old man coming, slowly, paths he'd trod so oft before.

Not one moment paused the maiden, but, with cheek and brow aglow,

Staggered up the gloomy tower where the bell swung to and fro;

As she climbed the slimy ladder, on which fell no ray of light,

Upward still, her pale lips saying, "Curfew *shall not* ring to-night!"

She has reached the topmost ladder; o'er her hangs the great, dark bell;
Awful is the gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to hell.
See, the ponderous tongue is swinging! 'tis the hour of curfew now!
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath and paled
her brow.

Shall she let it ring? No, never! Her eyes flash with sudden light,
As she springs and grasps it firmly: "*Curfew shall not ring to-night!*"

Out she swung, far out; the city seemed a speck of light below,
There 'twixt heaven and earth suspended, as the bell swung to and fro.
And the sexton at the bell-rope, old and deaf, heard not the bell;
Sadly thought that twilight curfew rang young Basil's funeral knell.
Still the maiden, clinging firmly, quivering lip and fair face white,
Stilled her frightened heart's wild beating: "*Curfew shall not ring
to-night!*"

It was o'er!—the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped once
more

Firmly on the damp old ladder, where, for hundred years before,
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed that she had done
Should be told long ages after. As the rays of setting sun
Light the sky with golden beauty, aged sires, with heads of white,
Tell the children why the curfew did not ring that one sad night.

O'er the distant hills comes Cromwell. Bessie sees him, and her brow.
Lately white with sickening horror, has no anxious traces now.
At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands, all bruised and torn ;
And her sweet young face, still haggard with the anguish it had worn,
Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light.
"Go! your lover lives," cried Cromwell. "Curfew shall not ring to-
night!"

Wide they flung the massive portals, led the prisoner forth to die,
All his bright young life before him, 'neath the darkening English sky.
Bessie came, with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with lovelight sweet,
Kneeling on the turf beside him, laid his pardon at his feet.
In his brave, strong arms he clasped her, kissed the face upturned
and white,
Whispered, "Darling, you have saved me! curfew will not ring to-
night."